

JESUS APPEARING TO MARY MAGDALENE

NO. 625

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“Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven devils.”
Mark 16:9.

THE doctrine of a risen Savior is exceedingly precious. The resurrection is the cornerstone of the entire building of Christianity. It is the keystone of the arch of our salvation. It would take us many a discourse to set forth all the streams of living water which flow from this one sacred source—the resurrection of our dear Lord and Savior Jesus Christ; but to *know* that He has risen, and to have fellowship with Him as such—communing with the risen Savior by possessing a risen life—seeing Him leave the tomb by leaving the tomb of worldliness ourselves, this is even more precious. The doctrine is the basis of the experience, but as the flower is lovelier than the root, so is the experience of fellowship with the risen Savior lovelier than the doctrine itself. I would have you *believe* that Christ rose from the dead so as to sing of it, and derive all the consolation which it is possible for you to extract from this well-ascertained and well-witnessed fact; but I beseech you rest not content even there. Brethren in Christ, I bid you aspire to see Christ Jesus by the eye of faith, and though you may not touch Him, yet may you be privileged to converse with Him, and to know that He is risen, you yourselves being risen in Him to newness of life. To know a crucified Savior as having crucified all my sins, is a rich kind of knowledge; and to know a risen Savior as having justified me, and to realize that He has bestowed upon me new life, given me to be a new creature through His own newness of life, this is a high style of experience—short of it, none of us ought to be satisfied to rest. In fact, I would have you this morning, like the blessed Magdalene, among those to whom Jesus Christ should manifest Himself after His resurrection, as He does not unto the world.

Let us come at once to the consideration of this first appearance of the Savior, after He had left the tomb. He appears to Mary Magdalene. There must have been some reason for the choice. We shall notice first of all, *who she was*; then, *how she sought*; and, thirdly, *how she found*.

I. First we shall have to take into consideration this morning WHO SHE WAS.

Jesus “appeared first to Mary Magdalene.” Why? One answer might be *because He chose to do so*. For in His sovereignty, He may reveal Himself to whomever He wills, and He may withhold Himself from whomever He shall please. “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion,” may be a very grating truth to human ears, but it is a truth of God for all that, and he who does not acknowledge it scarcely puts God into His true place as sitting upon the throne and doing as He wills with His own. I should be content to know that He appeared to Mary Magdalene first and not to ask another question if I thought it unwise to ask it, for, “He is the Lord, and let Him do what seems good to Him.” And if He will reveal Himself first to her, let it be so; here I see His grace and say, let His name be magnified in the sovereignty of His love.

But we may go a little further into the matter, I think, and perhaps find some reasons. He revealed Himself first to Mary Magdalene, a *woman*. Was it not most meet that a woman should first see the risen Savior? *She* was first in the transgression—let her be first in the justification. In yon garden, she was first to work our woe—let her, in that other garden, be the first to see Him who works our happiness. She takes the apple of that bitter tree which brings us all our sorrow; let her be the first to see that mighty Gardener who has planted a tree which brings forth fruit unto everlasting life! A woman let it be, for woman was last at the cross and last at the sepulcher—let her be earliest to return. The *Marys* embalmed the Savior, and put Him into the tomb—let one of their company be selected to be the first to see Him. Sisters in Christ Jesus, there is a curse which falls more heavily on you than on others—a curse which is peculiar to you; but here you have reason to rejoice since, “Unto you a child is born, unto you a

son is given.” It is by that child-bearing which brings you sorrow, that we have been delivered, even through the birth of Him, the Messiah, Emmanuel, God with us, whom you are privileged first to see because He is peculiarly yours. “The seed of the woman who shall bruise the serpent’s head.”

The text seems to indicate that the particular reason why He appeared to this woman first was, *because out of her He had cast seven devils*. Perhaps no person mentioned in the Scripture has been more singularly slandered than Mary Magdalene. It has been supposed that she was a harlot, and her name has been appended to societies which have the merciful objective of endeavoring to reclaim the fallen. In that sense let me say, Magdalene never was a “Magdalen.” She was not an unchaste woman. I think I can show you that it is quite impossible that she could have been. She was a woman of substance, and ministered to Christ’s necessities; she was possessed of wealth and property, and spent what she had upon the Savior, and was not likely, therefore, to have been one who earned her living by the pitiful trade of her sin. Moreover, she had seven devils and that, of itself, rendered her utterly incapable, one would think, of having been guilty of the sins of the flesh. A woman, a demoniac, mad with seven devils! Who would dream that a poor creature under so dreadful a torture as this could have been a harlot? The thing is clearly impossible to any thoughtful mind. But mark you, I believe if Magdalene were here herself, she would not regret that her pure name has been appended to these poor fallen ones. Here she has communion with her Lord and Master, who was “numbered with the transgressors,” and who gave Himself and all that He had in order that He might lift poor sinners from the degradation into which they had fallen. “No,” Magdalene would say, “do not blot my name off from yonder building; do not take it from that rescue society; I, though I have been kept from this iniquity, am well content to be the patron of all those who seek to win sinners from their sin.” Nevertheless, there is this about it—and here is where the mistake first arose—the possession of a devil is *typical*, in the Word of God, of sin. When we want to translate the miracle into spiritual meaning, we are always compelled to use the indwelling of a devil to be the metaphor—the picture of the indwelling of sin. Now, as Mary Magdalene had seven devils, though she was not, therefore, any the greater sinner, for she could not help the devils being there, yet she was thereby the more polluted; she was sevenfold polluted, and she becomes most rightly the type of the great sinner, the representative, in fact, of the very class of sinners to whom her name has been given. She was not literally such a sinner, but she was typically so, for in her there were seven devils. Typically, she stands at the head of those who are the greatest of all sinners against the law, and goodness, and grace of God, but she was not so except as a type.

Now, I think you see some reason why she should be selected as the first one to be seen by Christ, because *she had been a special trophy of Christ’s delivering power*. In her, He had won a special and signal victory over the hosts of hell—a perfect number of those evil spirits had been entrenched within her, and Christ’s victorious arm had driven them all out. She would always be regarded as a most illustrious specimen of what the great Savior can achieve. In this sense, I say, she was fitted to be the first that Jesus Christ should look upon and speak to, because out of all His disciples who were daily with Him, I know not of one who had experienced such a cure as that which had fallen to her lot. Let us learn from this, that the greatness of our sin before conversion should never make us think that we may not be specially favored with the very highest grade of fellowship. If Magdalene were not a harlot, yet I say she stands as the type of those who are possessors of seven sins, and deadly and damnable sins, too; and inasmuch as this woman is taken into the most intimate communion with Christ, and has the priority even above Peter, and James, and John, there is no reason, poor fallen sinner, why *you* should not have as rich a feast at the banquet of divine mercy as the very best, and most chaste, the most upright, pure and clean. If you come to Christ, if the seven devils are cast out of you, all these things shall never be mentioned against you; but you shall stand on a par with those who were preserved by providence and restraining grace from going into gross sins. When the prodigal came back, he was not told that he might eat his father’s bread, but it must be in the kitchen; he was not told that he might sit at the table, but it must be at the far end, below the salt. No, he sits at the table as the most honored guest, and his father feasts with him as if he had never gone astray! So is it forevermore with my God, to the chief of sinners. You shall not be permitted to eat the crumbs that fall from the table, but the daintiest food shall be yours, yes, and if you wish it, and will press forward and seek it, you shall have Benjamin’s mess—you shall have more than others! Oh, though you have been black and vile, He can make you so white and fair that He will

not blush to treat you as the man in the parable did his little ewe lamb. You shall drink of His cup and sleep in His bosom, and be very, very dear to Him, sinner though you have been. This seems to be upon the very surface of the text, that Mary Magdalene was selected to be the first to see the Savior because she was a woman—a woman out of whom seven devils had been cast—a type of a great sinner.

Again, she was a woman *in whom mighty grace had proved its power*. It is a well-known fact that devils never went out of men willingly in the Savior's day. They had always to be cast out. You find them foaming at the mouth as soon as Christ is seen, and when He says, "I command you to come out of him," the devil tears the man, rolls him in the dust, and subjects him to unusual spasms of pain and agony, before he will depart. Thus, seven devils had been driven out of Mary—forced out of her. Mary was no free-willer; her deliverance was achieved by irresistible, eternal, sovereign grace. And surely those are privileged to see most of Christ who *know* that their salvation is not of man, neither by man, but by the will and power of the gracious God alone. My brethren, there may be some of you who think that the devils went out of you; I know they did not go out of *me*. They had to be driven out with a strong hand, and an outstretched arm. There may be some who boast of the freeness of their wills, who think that they can come to Christ of themselves—but Mary did not—for no demoniacs ever sought to find Christ. They rather shunned the presence of the Savior, and cried, "What have we to do with You? Are You come to torment us before the time?" We rather hated divine grace and despised Christ; offers of mercy were lost upon us; proclamations of pardon, though honestly given, we trampled underfoot; it was only when the mighty Jesus, dressed in robes of love, came forth in the greatness of His strength, that we were compelled to yield, and our captivity was led captive by His might! I think that Mary Magdalene was thus selected because she was a choice instance of irresistible grace.

As soon as the devils were cast out of Mary, she appears to have left whatever her earthly position may have been, and to have become *a constant attendant on the Savior*. If you will kindly turn to the 8th chapter of Luke, you will see that our Lord was attended not only by men, but by women. "It came to pass afterward, that He went throughout every city and village, preaching and showing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God; and the twelve were with Him, and certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils, and Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto Him of their substance." It appears, then, that Magdalene was one who abode with Christ Jesus, His perpetual and constant companion. Some heard Him occasionally; she heard Him always. Mary, and Martha, and Lazarus, entertained Him with a feast now and then—she was *always* giving Him of her substance. There were many like Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, who were on Christ's side, but did not take up Christ's cross—*she* did. In all His afflictions, she was afflicted; when He was "despised and rejected of men," so was she. She was with Him, bearing His cross, and suffering His reproach. I like the thought of her being with the Savior. How much she must have seen! She saw the most of His miracles. How much she must have heard! She heard, with her own ears, His choice words; yes, and in the secret conclave where He opened up His parable to His favored disciples, Mary was privileged to be there with a few other honorable women. I suppose her to have been a woman of ripe years, as probably most of the others were—a matron. She was neglecting no household duties; it is clear she never had any—a woman with seven devils could not have had domestic duties.

One would think her friends must have been exceedingly glad to have her under the teaching of our Lord; and as long as they knew that she was in health with the Savior, they probably thought her to be in the place most fitting for her, as mad people are supposed to be most fitly attended when they are accompanied by their keeper or their physician. Having been a demoniac, she was happily freed from all household ties and bonds; and now, what if I say that Christ was her Father, her Brother, her Husband, her Friend, her children, her everything? He was her family, and there was she, daily with Him. We read that when Christ preached a certain truth, "Many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him." Not so the Magdalene. Let Him preach whatever He might, the woman of Magdala still hung upon His lips. To her, every word was honey, every syllable was a pearl. She treasured all, she fed upon all—she *abided* with Jesus. O dear friends, I wish *we* could get into this position, when our calling should be to serve Christ, and when our place should be always *with* Christ. I do not wonder that Christ appeared first to her when I recollect that Christ had so long been her first, her chief delight. She had

nothing in the world but Christ. It strikes me that very likely her being a demoniac had so separated her from all human sympathy, that there were none who loved her, none who cared for her, except the disciples and the society she had found through being a follower of Christ. And Jesus, pitying her, would not send her away as He did the most of those whom He cured.

One thing we must not pass over—*she spent her substance in relieving His needs*. The bag was not often full, while Judas had the keeping of it; and while there were so many poor, and Christ had such a tender heart, I will be bound to say that no surplus was ever allowed to mold there; but this woman, and the other Marys took care that it should never be quite empty, and that there should be something for the Savior when He needed it. She was not the woman, who broke the alabaster box of precious ointment over Christ's head, but her whole life long, her constant income was her alabaster box, and she spent what she had in ministering to the needs of her Lord. Brethren, if we would see much of Christ, let us *serve* Him. Depend upon it, you who live unto yourselves—who save your wealth when you ought to give it—you are not indulged with that fellowship with Jesus which others have, who have consecrated themselves and their substance wholly to the Lord. I am sure that by not giving, you miss infinite pleasure. I speak not now concerning your safety—I believe you are saved through faith in Christ Jesus—but if you do not devote yourselves and all that you have to the Master's cause, you never will be admitted to those choicer joys, to those more intimate fellowships which belong to those who live close to their Savior in consecration. Find me the happiest Christians, and I am sure they are those who are most attached to their Lord. Tell me who they are who sit most often under the banner of His love, and drink the deepest draughts from the cup of communion, and I am sure they will be those who give most, who serve best, and who abide closest to the bleeding heart of their dear Lord. Perhaps for this reason, Mary was privileged by the grace of God to be the first to see the risen Savior.

II. The second inquiry was, HOW SHE SOUGHT.

If any of us would have fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ, how are we to obtain it? We will use her as our guide.

And first Mary sought the Savior *very early* in the morning, by which we learn when we must, many times, begin to seek our Lord. If you can wait for Christ, and be patient in the hope of having fellowship with Him by-and-by, you will never have fellowship at all—for the heart that is fitted for communion is a hungry and a thirsting heart. If a man is hungry, you cannot say to him, "Be patient; wait!" "My hunger craves," he says, "give me food; I shall die if I am not fed." "But you must not be impatient; you must curb your appetite. Wait, be still." But the poor man replies, "I cannot! My hunger is so sharp; oh, give me bread or I famish! I will die!" You may reason with him, but there is no reasoning with a hungry stomach; and when a man's soul begins to hunger and thirst after Christ, it is not, "Tomorrow I will see Him," but, "Now! Now! Now!" Today, which God calls, "the *accepted* time," the Christian thinks to be the most *acceptable* time. I would have fellowship with Jesus *now*; while standing on this platform, my eyes desire to see Him; my head longs to place itself upon His bosom; my soul would cry with the spouse, "Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth, for His love is better than wine." If then, you want Jesus to reveal Himself to you, seek Him *now*, where you are. This pew may be as good as the garden; your own little quiet room, when the service is over, will be quite as near to the Savior as was the sepulcher—only seek Him at once, and allow no delays. Come, Jesus come, for the night is far spent! Arise, great Sun of Righteousness, and chase my gloom away!

She sought Him also, as you will observe, with *very great boldness*. It is said she stood at the sepulcher. The disciples had fled. Read the 8th verse, "They went out quickly, and fled from the sepulcher; for they trembled and were amazed; neither said they anything to anyone, for they were afraid." But Mary, we are told in John's account, "stood" at the sepulcher. "They may run who will," she said, "nothing can frighten me when I seek the Lord." There go the women, Mary and Susanna, the wife of Chuza; there they go, all frightened. There is Peter, the bold Peter; he takes to his heels; and even John, the loving John, follows after him; but Mary stands still. "No," she says, "let the worst come that can, nothing can be worse than losing my Master—if death itself should drag me away, it can only take me into the sepulcher where my Savior went, and perhaps I might find Him there; and if so, death were welcome!" Consider how many fears this timid woman must have had. It is not always safe to go abroad early in the morning. Certainly it was not in the city of Jerusalem, when the city was crowded, for a feeble woman to

rise early in the morning, and go out to the tomb! And yet she was not afraid. Let the shadows of the morning be still on the earth, she heeds them not; the shadows in her own soul are worse to her. You might have supposed she would have fears of the angels. She was not. She had had dealings with devils, and she was not to be frightened by angels. Seven devils at once dwelt in her. She knew too much of the supernatural to be frightened at the fall of a leaf, or any noise that might make her weaker companions turn pale. If then you would have Christ to be with you, beloved, seek Him boldly. Let nothing hold you back. Defy the world! Dare its pleasures! Laugh at its threats! Despise its promises! Count that, "The reproach of Christ is greater riches than the treasures of Egypt." Press on where others flee. Be like a lion where others turn their backs and Christ will then show Himself to you.

She stood *at the sepulcher*, she sought Christ *very faithfully*. Some find it hard to stand by a living Savior, but she will stand by a dead one. All the disciples forsook Him and fled when He was only in captivity—but she cleaves to Him when His body is in the sepulcher. Brave woman! You will not only stand by the Master, but by the Master's sepulcher. True heroine! You love even the couch where His dead form sleeps. I would that we sought Christ after this mode, willing to stand by the very form of sound words which has been delivered to us—standing by the doctrine as well as by the Person—cleaving and clinging to the very least thing that has to do with Christ, and feeling that if He has sanctioned it, it is ours to die for the sepulcher as well as for the Man. Oh, if we sought Christ with such faithfulness, we would not long lack the comfort of His presence!

Still note further that John tells us she, "stood outside the sepulcher *weeping*," which makes me remark that she sought Jesus very earnestly, for as she stood there, not finding Him, she wept. I do not read that the others did this. They loved the Savior, but they did not love Him as much. At any rate, they had not her sensitiveness and delicacy of soul. She wept. I think I know why she wept. "My Savior is gone," she said, "I cannot find Him." Then the thoughts of His sad death came rushing full upon her soul. She thought she saw that dreadful scene over again that had made her heart ache and throb. She fancied she saw Him again dragged through the howling populace, abused and despised with His poor back all covered with gore. She thought she beheld once more that blessed body torn with the nails; she marked again the anguish of the fever which came upon Him as He hung upon the tree. She had been the last to watch Him. She stood and watched Him with the other women, and now she cannot bear the thought of all that He has suffered, and the fear that He has gone, gone, gone forever! She weeps. And the Savior could not bear to see her weep. I think those teardrops were as spells that bound the Savior captive, and made Him come forth and show Himself to her. If you want Christ's presence, you are sure to get it if you weep after it! If you have gone so far that you cannot be happy unless He comes and says to you, "You are My beloved"—if you cannot be content without a kiss from those dear lips—you will have it! He cannot deny those tears—those are heart-breakers to Him—those drops shall burn their way into His soul! You shall look into the face bedewed with tears, and see the loveliness and beauty of Him who was "despised and rejected of men," if you stand outside at the sepulcher *weeping*.

Nor have I quite done. Mary sought him *perseveringly*, for as she wept, she stooped down and looked into the sepulcher. She had been in it, and found nothing—what made her look again? Have you not, when you have been seeking for something which you felt you *must* find, pulled out a drawer, and looked through it carefully, turning over everything and yet, being exceedingly anxious, you have gone to it once more? You were certain the object was not there, and yet you were so anxious to find it that you looked again and again; and perhaps you returned six or seven times to the place which you had searched thoroughly at first, for you were so desirous to find it. It was so with her. She thought, "Perhaps my eyes may have been blinded—possibly I may not have looked in the right corner—I will look again." And so she stooped down, and looked into the sepulcher—the tears still flowing from her eyes. This showed her perseverance. Yes, and if we would know Christ, He is not to be found by those who merely call upon Him once. Cry to Him by the hour together, if He comes not to you. If going into your chamber once does not give you a sight of Jesus, go again, go again, go again; for mark me, if you should be kept waiting seven years for an interview with the great King—if you should once be favored to see Him—if He shall stretch out the silver scepter to you, you will think yourself all too well rewarded! A thousand—a million years of seeking would be well repaid by one glance from His eyes, and one

look from His face. Therefore, seek perseveringly, patiently, and anxiously—desiring that the risen Savior would manifest Himself to you.

We have almost finished upon this point, but we must note that she sought the Savior *only*. All her thoughts were concentrated upon *Him*. I think if I had been there, I would have been greatly gratified with a sight of the angels. It strikes me that I should have been observing what the forms of beauty which angelic spirits bear were. But she seems to have taken no note of them at all, she says to them, “They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him.” What cared she for angels? If as many had come as the 70,000 chariots of God, they could not have turned away Mary’s thoughts from *Him*. To the gardener, her speech is all full of her Lord, “Sir, if you have borne Him from here, tell me where you have laid Him, and I will take Him away.” Mary’s heart was set on one thing. Like an arrow shot from the bow, she sped right on to the target of her heart’s desire. And, oh, if Christ is your one and only love; if your heart has cast out all rivals, if your spirit seeks Him, and cries out for the Lord—even for the living God—you shall soon come and appear before God.

To close this point, let me say there was *much ignorance* in Mary. How was it that she sought the living among the dead? There was *very little faith* in Mary, for faith would have told her that He had risen again on the third day according to His own words. But, oh, there was much *love*, and Jesus overlooked her lack of knowledge and overlooked her weakness of faith, because of the strength of her love. It seems to me that she loved more than John did, for John says, “Then went in that other disciple, and he saw and believed.” That is right, John; you have most faith. He believes, and then he goes away expecting he should see what he believed. But Mary, though she has far less faith, yet, you will perceive, has so much love that she will not go away from the sepulcher, but just keeps her place there, watching at the post of His door, not satisfied till she can see Him. What love was this! Brethren, if we would see Jesus, we must love Him much. I would God I loved Him as my heart desires to love Him. I hope you can say—

*“Yes, I love You, and adore You.
Oh for grace to love You more!”*

Let us wake ourselves up to greater intensity of affection. He loved us before the stars were made; He loved us with His whole heart; He loved us to perfection; He loved us unto death. Oh, my cold heart, why do you not melt? Oh, my adamant heart, why do you not dissolve? For such love as this we ought to give Jesus our warmest affection—blazing like coals of juniper; and if we did, we would not be long without finding Him—for love would find Him and fetch Him to our arms, and we would see Him and rejoice in Him!

III. The last point now comes, and that is, **HOW SHE FOUND HIM**. He was present, but she could not see Him. Christian, Christ is present here this morning, though you cannot, perhaps, perceive Him. You have not to cry to the Savior to come from heaven to visit you—“Where two or three are met together in My name,” He says, “There am I in the midst of them.” Jesus is here! In these aisles and pews, in this area, and these galleries—Jesus is here. If you have no communion with Him, believer, it is because unbelief darkens your eyes—or grief, or care, or sin makes you blind.

But Jesus Christ was discovered to Mary *by a word*. I want you to notice that it was not a sermon, it was *one* word. It was not a long discourse, but just one word of two syllables, and that not a word of mystery, but a simple word—a word, however, which had this about it—it came from Jesus’ lips; it was personal and went home to her. This is all *you* need, beloved, this morning. Fifty thousand words from me would only weary you, but listen to one word from the lips of the Savior, a personal word, waking the recollections of your spirit, proving that He remembers you—and cheerfully, on the strength of that word, your soul may stay on earth and finish her threescore years and ten. That one word was her own name—“Mary.” It was spoken just as she had heard it in the days gone by; and, oh, if He would speak to me as He has spoken at the hill Mizar; if He would say of Himself as He has done in days never to be forgotten, “I am your salvation,” we would not want any more, one word would be enough. Oh, beloved, keep on seeking Christ, and you will find Him in a moment. Do not complain if you have not an edifying ministry, or because perhaps, this morning, the discourse seems dull to you; do not complain because you are lax in prayer, and have not that enlargement you ought to have in divine things; one word will take you up as on the wings of an eagle, and give you joy and peace!

Notice that as soon as the one word was given, *her heart acknowledged allegiance by another word*. She did not make a long speech. The Master's heart was too full to say more than one word, and so was hers. That one word would naturally be the most fitting for the occasion. What, then, is the word which suggests itself as being best adapted to a soul in the highest state of devotion? It is a word implying obedience. She said, "Master." You can never get into a state of mind for which this confession of allegiance will be a word too cold. No, when your spirit glows the most with heavenly fire, then you will say, "I would serve You living, dying; Your love has bound me with cords to the horns of the altar; I am Your servant—I am Your servant—You have loosed my bonds." If you can say, "Master," this morning, you can say much. If your soul feels that His will is *your* will, that His law is your love—that you would, if you could—in all things be conformed to His image, then, whether you have ecstasies or no ecstasies, whether you have joys or no joys—you stand in a happy, holy place! He must have said, "Mary," or else she could not have said, "Rabboni."

After she had confessed allegiance, the next impulse was *to seek close fellowship*; but she made a mistake as most of us would have done—she wanted a manifest, carnal fellowship. So she began to clasp Him, and to hold Him by the feet, and then He said, "Touch Me not." We are apt to seek for communion with Christ in a sensuous way. Let us be spiritual, brethren. We shall never have Christ say to us, "Touch Me not," if the touch is a touch of faith, and love. He only says, "Touch Me not," when we want to handle Him with these hands, and see Him with these eyes. Let us walk by faith, and not by sight; and then we may take Him in our arms and keep Him there, and hold Him and not let Him go; and the more endearing we can be with Him spiritually, the better He will like it. We must shake off all those gross ideas which strive to mix with high and heavenly enjoyment. If you feel a desire this morning after near and close communion, do not restrain it; press forward, put your hands into His side, and your finger into the print of the nails. I know that worldlings will not understand me, but believers will. Let me assure you, there is a communion with Christ which is quite as real as if we had the privilege which Thomas had. My own soul has seen the Savior and talked with Him; though these eyes cannot see Him, though these lips cannot speak with Him, and these ears cannot hear Him, yet my soul's mouth has kissed Him, and my soul's ears have heard Him, and my heart's mouth has blessed Him 10,000 times, and I hope to do it yet again, and will never be satisfied until I can do it continually. Press on, beloved—you may say as the divine Song does, "Oh that You were as my brother, that sucked the breasts of my mother! When I should find You outside, I would kiss You." Oh, beloved, hold communion with Him! Feed on Him, for His flesh is meat, indeed, and His blood is drink, indeed.

Further, we may notice, as the result of her finding the Savior, *she entered in His service*, for He said, "Go, tell My brethren," and away she went to tell others that she had found the Savior! If you have the privilege of seeing Christ, do not eat the morsel behind the door. Have you found honey? Taste it yourself, but go and tell others. You cannot have seen much of the Savior, unless you desire to let others see Him. Your piety is a sham, a flash in the pan, a will-o'-the-wisp if it does not lead to practical service. Are there not some Mary Magdalenes here who have had seven devils cast out of them? You have felt the power of divine grace in your heart; you love your Savior; you long for communion with Him. My dear sister, as soon as you have fellowship, let me charge you, in the Master's name—do not be afraid to speak to others what the Lord shall say in private to you! We do not allow women to enter the pulpit—that is a violation both of divine grace and nature—it is as much an offense to good manners as it is to God's own law. But you have your own sphere, you have your own place of work—you can gather your own sex about you; there are your children, your servants; you have multitudes of opportunities. Tell others that Jesus has risen, that there is a risen life—that you know it, and that you pant and long that others, too, should rise from the grave of sin to the new life in Jesus!

As for you, men and brothers, to whom it pertains more particularly to be teachers and pastors, I charge you, whatever you have found within the circle of fire where the closest communion is, whatever you have seen in the deep mines of mystery, whatever Christ has revealed to you in hours of retirement when you have come nearest to Him—tell it to His family, feed His flock with it—bring forth these things as choice dainties where the beloved of the Lord may feast even to the full. "Go, tell my brethren," said Christ, and so say we.

When the two disciples had journeyed to Emmaus, and at the evening meal, after the toil of the day's journey was over, were resting themselves, you remember that the mysterious stranger, who had so enchanted them with His holy words, took bread and broke it, and then it was known to them in the breaking of the bread—but He vanished out of their sight! Well, what happened then? They had compelled Him to enter in and abide with them, because the day was far spent, but though now, much later, their love was a lamp to their feet! Yes, wings also, for they forgot the darkness and their despair; their weariness was all gone, and immediately they began to journey back the threescore furlongs to tell the glad news of a risen Lord who had appeared to them by the way. They reach the body of Christians in Jerusalem, and are received by a burst of joyful news, before they can tell their own tale. Now, brethren, these early Christians were all on fire to speak of Christ's resurrection, and to proclaim what they knew of the Lord. They made common property of their experiences—and so ought we to do. John's account of the sepulcher needs to be supplemented by Peter, and Mary can speak of something further still. Combined, we have a full testimony, and nothing can be spared. Thus, we have all peculiar gifts and special manifestations, but the one objective God has in view is the benefit of the whole body of Christ. We must, therefore, bring our possessions and lay them at the apostles' feet, and make distribution unto all of what God has given to us. Keep back no part of the precious truth of God, but speak what you know, and testify what you have seen. Let not the toil, or darkness, or possible unbelief of your hearers weigh one moment in the scale. Up, and be marching to the place of duty, and there tell what great things God has shown to your soul! And if you hear the sweet words of Christ, I can promise you a holy flame of bright and beaming joy as you speak of the truth of God to benefit the souls of others.

Finally, if there are any inquirers here, as I hope there are—if you are seeking Jesus this morning, and want to be saved by Him and through Him—remember, poor inquirer, that Jesus is near you now. There is *nothing* for you to do! No climbing to heaven, no going down to the depths to bring Him up; He is near you now.

If you believe that Jesus is the Christ, if you trust your soul to Him, you are saved! Jesus is here to everyone who will simply give himself up to Him to be saved by Him. Jesus calls you this morning by your name—He gives you a special invitation to come to Him. Listen to that name! Respond this morning—say, “Master.” Take Jesus to be your Lord—He deserves it. You are not your own, but you are bought with a price. Give yourself, as a blood-bought one, up to Him. He asks you as He asks Mary, “Woman, why do you weep?” He asks of each of you who are seeking Him, “Whom do you seek?” Do you know what it is you seek? Do you seek some strange feeling? Do you seek signs and wonders, dreams and visions? Seek them no longer! Jesus is what you need; take Him and be saved. There, close at your side, is the food your hungry spirit needs—look not up to heaven—look not down to earth! There is in Jesus all you need! Feed on, beloved—faith shall fill your mouth; love shall enjoy the sweet dainty, and your whole body, soul, and spirit shall be sanctified by the divine repast. May God bless you, dear friends, all of you, by giving you, like Mary Magdalene, to seek the Lord.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—JOHN 20.

Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.

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